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PENITENTIAL TEARS;

OR

A CRY FROM THE DUST,

BY

"THE THIRTY-ONE,"

PROSTRATED AND PULVERIZED BY THE HAND OF

HORACE MANN,

SECRETARY, &c.

By Leonard Withington.

Γουνοῦμαι σ', Ἀχιλεῦ· σὺ δέ.

BOSTON:
C. STIMPSON, 106, WASHINGTON STREET.

MDCCCXLV.

C

by Rev. Leonard Withington

BH
Oct. 15. 1844

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TO THE PUBLIC.

Having observed, in the newspapers, that one of the "Thirty-one"— that unlucky number, which yields so "contemptible a product," and which is doomed to such immortal infamy — has renounced his standing, and repudiated his connection, I was unwilling that the numerical charm should be broken.

Suffice it, therefore, to say, that I am a volunteer, who, touched with a generous sorrow, have come forward, without the knowledge of the "Thirty-one," stepped into their ranks in order to fill up the unlucky number, and perchance to receive my death-blow from the hand of Achilles. Let not his vengeance mistake its object. I am willing to face it on my individual responsibility: for if I must die, what an honor to die by such a noble hand.

Ἐπεί ουχ ὁμογάζιος Ἕκτορός εἰμί.

PENITENTIAL TEARS, &c.

The castigation which Mr. Mann, with equal candor and truth, has inflicted upon us, shall not be without its salutary effects. It is good for us to be afflicted; if in the insolence of prosperity, we have ventured to question the infallibility of one who seems born to dictate, and whose sacred authority may overbear, when it cannot enlighten, we shall, in our affliction, take a wiser course. We are conquered; we are prostrate; we confess it. For if we measure the degree of our humiliation by the motives of our conqueror, we know not that we shall ever be able to rise again. Yet the wretched privilege is allowed to the most abject beings, to complain; and we have the Honorable Secretary's own authority, for believing that he is a man of such philanthropy, such meekness, such generosity, his heart so leaps into his mouth, at the very suggestion of a plan of benevolence, or the prospect of doing good, that his placability will, no doubt, pardon us, when he sees us subdued, and weeping—prostrate at his feet;—*at least, all of us but one.*

The meekest of men may sometimes be angry. Moses once spoke unadvisedly with his lips, and Job complained. But such a sight is always a phenomenon which excites our

attention; we are as much excited at it, as they would be at a thunder shower in Egypt, or an earthquake among the hills of New England.

When the meekness of Horace Mann is disturbed, whose softness, and benevolence have been sounded through the State by annual Reports, for at least these seven years, when such a man condescends to lay aside, for a moment, the equanimity of a philosopher and the gentleness of a Christian, (belonging however to no sect,) to use such language as the following:

"Did I believe that invisible spirits were appointed to watch over children, and to rescue them from harm, and were the edifice to be burned down, where such a teacher goes daily 'to lash and dogmatize,' I should think that some beneficent angel had applied the torch, to scatter the pupils beyond the reach of his demoralizing government. As to that man, until his nature changes, or my nature changes, we must continue to dwell on opposite sides of the moral universe:"

and all this, because an opponent had ventured to question, whether the Secretary *was ready to give his heart as an offering to the cause;* surely the spectacle is extraordinary.

"Can he be angry? I have seen the cannon
When it hath blown his ranks into the air;
And like the devil, from his very arm
Puffed his own brother; And can he be angry?
Something of moment then: I will go meet him,
There's matter in't indeed, if he be angry:"

However, we must not wonder; the patience of a saint may be exhausted. It is not the first time in the history of human infirmity, when the artist's irritability has been exactly in proportion to the frailty of his edifice. Absurdity and innovation need all the sanction of infallibility to protect them from ridicule and ruin.

The first question that naturally arises is — What have we

done? What is our offence? How have we merited this terrible castigation? The truth is, that we have ventured, very respectfully, to question the wisdom of certain innovations, which, in any other age than the present, would have been discarded as too absurd even for thought or deliberation. In this opinion, we were certainly sincere; and we vainly supposed that in this free land, we had a right to speak out our convictions, and to oppose what we considered as dangerous error. We knew that respect was due to the office of a man, selected by the wisdom of the land to watch over the interests of education, and hitherto we had seen nothing in his conduct to lead us to question his moral character. It should be remembered too, that the innovations were exceedingly radical: they went to change the foundations of our system. All coercive authority was to be expelled from our schools; emulation was to be discarded; text books were undervalued; solitary study was to give place to almost perpetual recitation; the innocence of human nature was assumed; and all children, good, bad, and indifferent, were to be led along by the cords of love; a religion was to be taught definite enough for a child to understand it; and yet neither Jewish, Pagan, Mahometan, or Christian; or if the name of Christianity was admitted, it was to consist of no definite truths, (for these had all been disputed and were therefore sectarian,) but it was to be a *general* Christianity, so weakened and diluted, that infidels might believe, and sensualists applaud it. In short, it was to be a Christianity that was to command the assent of every body. To all this, we must add, that these fine plans seemed to have a wide application, which even their author scarcely ventured to mention.

In Mr. Mann's benevolence, education ceases to be a task to the pupil; all the burden is put upon the teacher; no

hill of difficulty is to meet the young pilgrim; he is to be surrounded with clouds of incense, and to tread on softness and flowers; the innate love of knowledge is to be his sole stimulus, sufficient to arm him against all difficulties, and to incite him to all the industry he needs. Now it seemed pretty obvious, to a consistent man, that on this system, all classical learning must be discarded—the Greek and Latin languages could never be attained. For it is too much, even for Mr. Mann's scheming mind, to suppose that the distinctions of a Latin grammar, or a paradigm of the Greek verbs, are to be mastered by a pupil who has been taught to make his education his amusement. This conclusion is the more natural, as Dr. Rush, the prototype and pattern of the Secretary, had said the same thing more than fifty years ago. "How few boys," says Dr. Rush, "relish Latin and Greek lessons! The pleasure they sometimes derive in learning them, is derived from the tales they read, or from a competition which awakens a love of honor, and which might be displayed on an hundred more useful subjects; or it may arise from gaining the good will of their masters or parents. Where these incentives are wanting, how bitter does the study of languages render that innocent period of life, which seems exclusively intended for happiness." "I wish I had never been born," said a boy, eleven years old, to his mother; "Why my son," said the mother. "Because I am born into a world of trouble." "What trouble," said his mother, smiling, "have you known, my son?" "Trouble enough, mama," said he, "two Latin lessons to get every day." Now certainly with these views, the learned languages must be rejected. There is no royal road to them—no beautiful mountain like the modern Hymettus, where the bees murmur to the very top. From these extravagant views, we have expressed a respectful dissent. And hence, we belong to the "unlucky number"—hence we are "pulverised."

We thought, (perhaps falsely,) that the language we used was uncommonly kind and respectful; and as to our sentiments, the only fault was the presumption of venturing to differ from him. We said, explicitly, that his report, "in all its connexion with the interests of education, and in all its bearings upon the reputation and influence of numerous teachers, is one of high importance. This importance is greatly enhanced by the high official station, and the elevated moral and literary character of its author." (Remarks, p. 5.) We explicitly stated, that we differed from him "with great reluctance." "We doubt not that the Honorable Secretary is fully aware of the great responsibility involved in the exercise of the powerful and widely extended influence of his office, and that it is his desire faithfully to acquit himself in the discharge of that responsibility." (Remarks, p. 39.) We said again, that "though differing from Mr. Mann, upon this subject, we would by no means be supposed to undervalue his efforts in the cause of education, or detract aught from the benefits his labors have conferred. Our dissent from his views arises from an honest conviction that, if adopted, they would retard the progress of sound learning." (Remarks, pp. 56–7.) We closed our pamphlet with these emphatic words: "We have to say, finally, that as we came forward reluctantly to the task of publicly expressing our dissent from some of the sentiments advanced, and plans of teaching proposed, by the Honorable Secretary in his report, we take leave of the subject, with the satisfaction which springs from a consciousness of having discharged a duty which we owed alike to ourselves, to the public, and to him." (Remarks, page 144.)

This humble, and almost abject manner of approaching his dignity could not shield us from the anger of an enraged philanthropist.

He has heated his furnace seven times hotter than it was

wont to be heated; he has poured out the phials of his indignation upon us. He charges us with being the foes to improvement — (as perhaps personified in himself) — of wishing to *petrify* education, and fix it in its infant state — of having disgraced all the Boston teachers and ourselves — of rolling "sea fog" over his sunshine — of condemning veterans when we are freshmen; in short, for a man of such matchless moderation, he seems to be very angry with us. All this would be a wonder, did we not know that his views of education lie in this dilemma: they must either be infallibly true, or supremely ridiculous. To doubt them is to expose them to contempt. Newton was very calm when *his* demonstrations were questioned; but woe to the luckless wight who ventures to question the delicious dreams of a theoretic man. Knowing that his conclusions cannot bear the test of reason, the highest provocation you can offer him is to examine them.

It is a beautiful touch of human nature in the great Cervantes, when he makes his renowned Don Quixote angry at opposition, just in proportion to the magnificence of his speculations. It was no small provocation to have such sweet dreams disturbed. When Sancho at the inn ventured to question whether Dorothea was the Princess Micomicona, because he saw her nuzzling in every corner, "Good heavens! how great was the indignation of Don Quixote at hearing his squire speak thus disrespectfully! I say it was so great, that, with speech stammering, tongue faltering, and living fire darting from his eyes, he said, Scoundrel! designing, unmannerly, ignorant, ill-spoken, foul mouthed, impudent, murmuring and back-biting villain! darest thou utter such words in my presence, and in the presence of these illustrious ladies, and hast thou dared to entertain such rude and insolent thoughts in thy confused imagination? Avoid my presence, monster

of nature — treasury of lies — magazine of deceit — store house of rogueries — inventor of mischief — publisher of absurdities, and enemy of the respect due to royal personages — begone, and appear not before me, on pain of my indignation. And in saying this he arched his brows, puffed his cheeks, stared round about him, and gave a violent stamp with his right foot on the floor, all manifest tokens of the rage locked up in his breast." Such was the rage of the knight who was usually a pattern of urbanity and politeness. And if there be any philanthropist on earth who imagines that invention is his own prerogative, and that all benevolence and wisdom have become impersonated in his own form; and if he wants terms in which to vent his indignation against any hardy doubter, who ventures to question his principle or oppose his influence, let him go to the romance, and improve his vocabulary by the fertility of Don Quixote.

The next question we may ask is, What has been our provocation? Were we obliged by the laws of God or man to hold our peace?

The public need not to be told that the duties of a practical school-master are exceedingly onerous. It is all a long dreary march up hill. Let schemers say what they will, the task of putting true knowledge into the early mind, is slow, toilsome, unostentatious and discouraging. It was long ago remarked, "There is no royal road to geometry." Perhaps there is no work where such tiresome efforts are attended with such apparently small results. Knowledge leaks into the mind by drops. We heard an old teacher make use of a homely comparison. It is, said he, *boosting* a clumsy boy up into a tree — he is perpetually falling back on you.

In these unappreciated duties, in which, as Johnson says, "every man that has ever undertaken the task, can tell what slow advances he has been able to make, and how much

patience it requires to recal vagrant inattention, to stimulate sluggish indifference, and to rectify absurd misapprehension," in these duties a man needs all the sympathy of an enlightened community. He certainly does not wish to see them infected with false theories, and taught to indulge in impossible expectations. What can be more calculated to move a poor school-master's indignation, when he is toiling alone to row his frail canoe against wind and tide — few to visit and none to pity him — than to hear of an itinerant philosopher, going from Dan to Beersheba to teach the people to make demands that none can gratify, and to form hopes that must be disappointed. The merchant hates the pedler, and the physician the quack, and all men *ought* to hate popular delusion. In the meantime, while our task is increased by enormous exaggeration, our accustomed implements are taken from our hands. We must burn our rods; we must use no emulation; we must discard our text books; we must interest the dull, the thoughtless and the lazy; we must make labor as light as recreation. We must throw away the alphabet, and then teach children the power of letters; we must work impossible wonders; and all this to prove that education is an advancing science, and that seven annual reports have not been made in vain. Surely there was something here to call forth a remonstrance from those who believe these opinions to be wrong. What can be more exciting than to find stumbling blocks thrown into a path already obstructed, and by a man who has never borne the burden and the heat of the day?

But our object was not to justify ourselves, but to confess our guilt; and to shed penitential tears over our manifold offences. We confess that it is just as certain that we have done wrong, as it is that the opinions of the Honorable Secretary are reasonable and correct. Our motives are as black as his heart is immaculate. If his reputation is the altar,

our pride and our profit shall be the victim and the sacrifice. We solemnly confess that our conduct will be proved to be far from innocence, when his schemes are shown to be far from absurdity and extravagance; and when the world acquits him of being a visionary, it shall see us returning prodigals, weeping and prostrate at his feet. O, the agony that will wring our hearts, when he shall show his judgment to be sober, and his plans to be practicable.

In the meantime, if we may be permitted from the dust in which he has prostrated us to murmur a stifled conviction, it shall be, that our whole offence is dissent from his assertions. We do not agree with him; and we have expressed our dissent in very decorous language. We utterly deny that we have garbled our quotations, or misrepresented his language. He has said precisely the things which we have represented him as saying; and in the very spirit which we have represented. Notwithstanding the charge of "suppressing qualifying remarks and fabricating a sentence I never could have written, and imputing to me a signification I never intended;" he did say, and insinuate precisely the things we have imputed to him.

They are the natural consequence of his views; and a man who never gets his head beneath the stars to see what is going on in this sublunary state, who imagines a perfection just suited to his own fancy, must of course despise all that is practical. If the Scotch schools, as he has represented them, are patterns of activity, and the Prussian schools beautiful specimens of the gentle influence of love and moral suasion, of course New England teachers are *hybernating animals;* they are under a *sleepy supervision;* his hyperboles are no lies, they are sober expressions of his opinions.

What is it to us, or to the public, that he has covered up his goading thorns under a profusion of flowers, that he is

paying unmeaning compliments, when he is aiming a fatal blow under the fifth rib. The soft language only increases the insult. When the Pharisees with the Herodians shewed the tribute-money, they were exceedingly respectful in their preface; *Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man; for thou regardest not the person of men.* But even these men would have been too wise to complain, had their compliments been omitted in the sacred record.

The first question that presents itself to our notice is, Have we misrepresented the Honorable Secretary, in saying that he is a visionary projector in his schemes, and an inaccurate observer of facts. If he is not, we are certainly wrong, and are ready, on conviction, to make the *amende honorable.*

We affirm then, in the first place, it is somewhat difficult to say precisely on what ground the Secretary does stand. He hardly discards corporal punishment, and yet he regards it as a relic of barbarism. He reverences the Bible, and yet some of its most comprehensive precepts are only suited to an early stage of civilization. Solomon was a wise man, and yet some of the projectors of this age are a great deal wiser. How much inspiration there is in the Old Testament, he has not exactly told us, but yet the Gospel evidently contradicts it, though an Apostle says, *What son is he whom his father chasteneth not?* And again, *We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence.*

On the subject of emulation he is pretty clear; he wholly discards it; but on the elements of reading he is foggy again; for after having explicitly said that "no improvements could be hoped for in teaching to read, while the present mode of teaching the alphabet continues," it turns out at last that the alphabet is to be taught.

"Mr. Pierce, in the lecture from which the quotation in the 'Remarks' is made, says, 'After the scholars are able to manage with

ease, simple sentences, such as are found in Gallaudet's and Worcester's Primers, Bumsted's First Book, or Swan's Primary Reader, let them be taught the names and sounds, or powers of letters.' Now the first sentence in Gallaudet's Primer is, '*Frank had a dog; his name was Spot.*' In Worcester's it is, '*A nice fan.*' In Bumsted's 'First Book,' the first sentence has twenty different, but very simple words; the second has only six. In Swan's, it is, '*I can make a new cage.*' Mr. Pierce's direction therefore, is, 'After the scholars are able to manage with ease, such simple sentences' as the above, 'let them be taught the names and sounds of letters.' What an outrage then, was it to say, that Mr. Pierce would postpone the teaching of letters, until after 'two thousand,' or 'one thousand,' or 'seven hundred,' whole words had been learned, and *then*, 'IF EVER,' begin 'to combine letters into words.' Must a child learn *seven hundred words* before he can read, 'A nice fan,' or other similar sentences? Take the common type, in which this Reply is printed, and I doubt whether seven hundred different words can be found on any *three full pages* in it.

"Still more enormous is the statement in relation to the 'Primer,' which is said to be my 'standard;' for, according to the directions contained in that, about a fifth part of the letters were to be learned, by or before the time that *one* hundred words were to be; and in regard to spelling, which, of course, must be subsequent to learning the letters, it says, 'There is no doubt, that the sooner it is begun, intelligently, the better.' Yet the 'Remarks' say, 'What surprises us most, if this be the meaning, is that Mr. Mann should discover from such defective instruction, reasons for a *total* neglect of the alphabet.' The italicising of the word *total*, is not mine; the 'Remarks' themselves give it this emphasis of falsehood. What an exorbitant misrepresentation, on the threshold of the section, of my views and of the views of those with whom I agree!"

Now Mr. Mann cannot suppose that if any instructer, in the process of teaching the alphabet, should choose, in order to stimulate attention, to employ a few pictures, with a few whole words under them, we should have any controversy with him. If this is all he means, his plan is perfectly harmless, and we wish him and all others God speed in their efforts.

But he certainly brought forth his plan with much more pomp and circumstance; he evidently regarded it as a

great innovation. It was a new foundation; and no hope could be entertained of great improvements in teaching until it was universally adopted. But whatever may be his reasonableness here, which evidently can only be saved from folly, by the extent of the innovation — it is evident that he regards children as born with a burning thirst for knowledge; going to school is but taking them to a toy-shop; they may be led along through all the rough and smooth places of education with interest and delight. Shakspeare's *whining schoolboy, creeping like a snail, unwilling to school*, is a picture no longer to be acknowledged. "I deny," says the Secretary, with that peculiar eloquence which belongs to his views of truth, "I deny that any Christian man, or any enlightened heathen man, is left without resource, under such circumstances, 'unless he appeals to fear.' He has the resource of conscience, which is no more extinguished in the child's soul, by the clamorous passions that, for a time, may have silenced its voice, than the stars of heaven are annihilated by the cloud which for a moment obscures them from our vision. He has the resource of social and filial affections. He has the love of knowledge and of truth, which never, in all its forms, is, or can be, eradicated from a sane mind. If the teacher is what he ought to be, he has the resource of a pure and lofty example, in his own character; and he moves before the eyes of his pupils as a personification of dignity and learning and benevolence. What a damning sentence does a teacher pronounce upon himself, when he affirms that he has no resources in his own attainments, his own deportment, his own skill, his own character; but only in the cowhide and birch, and in the strong arm that wields them!" Now the question is, with these views of education, are we libellers, or is he a visionary?

Let us begin with punishment. So congenial has it been to the sentiments of mankind, that the rod has passed into a

common metaphor. When Mr. Mann thinks he is combating prejudice, he is certainly at war with nature. The necessity of resorting to corporal force arises from the sensuality of our nature, and the fact that children cannot comprehend the sublime motives which open before them in an immortal existence. Before we eat the fruit, we must plant the tree. Before we win the crown, we must run the race. Some part of education is spent in getting, not directly knowledge, but the vehicles of knowledge; just as the carpenter or mason may spend some time in putting up the staging. The *chesnut burs*, after all, are very appropriate emblems. When a general takes some advantageous height, levels the trees, blows up the rocks, smooths the surface, and draws up the cannon, the work for a while seems very useless, and very discouraging; the common soldier must take it on trust. But when the battery is laid, and the walls of the enemy begin to fall, then the meanest sentinel sees the object to be attained. We must meet these rough places in the paths of knowledge; and the skilful instructer must help his pupil over them as well as he can. Indeed difficulties are good for us; our enemies are our friends, and our antagonist is our helper. Who has not known the pleasure of triumphing over a problem, which at first well nigh threw him into despair?

Every sound and sullen scholar looks back with pleasure on these delicious difficulties. These soft and silken reformers who wish to smooth the passes to knowledge, and make a world for the young which God has never made, would only spoil the rising generation, supposing they could carry their plans into execution. A wise man devoutly thanks God that the price of knowledge is labor, and that when we buy the truth, we must pay the price. If you wish to enjoy the prospect at the mountain's summit, you must climb its rugged sides.

What would this new school of philanthropists say to the beautiful allegory, — the Choice of Hercules,— first pictured by Prodicus, then adorned by the prose of Xenophon, and afterwards by the poetry of Lowth. They must change the personages in that instructive scene, and give to virtue the language of vice. Is not the philosopher describing a modern reformer, when he says, "She came to him with the most elegant skin; whiter and more rosy than reality; with a gait more erect than nature; having her eyes wide open, (that is staring at wonders,) and in garments, through which her beauty appeared?" And then she went on to promise him *almost* as many impossibilities as are attempted in the Normal School at Lexington. What must these men think of Hesiod's paths to education, τρηχυς το πρῶτον; but which was found *more easy* for having been *once so difficult*? The truth is, all antiquity is against them; and they can only be right when they reverse the records of experience, and show that the whole world has been mistaken.

Mr. Mann says, that corporal punishment is a "relic of barbarism," and that it came down to us from the dark ages. It is very evident that his *dark ages* are not the middle ages, for Horace, who is supposed to know something of the Augustan age, speaks of it. *Memini quae plagosum mihi parvo orbilium dictare.** Orbilius was his school-master. *Plagosus Orbilius* may be strictly translated, My feruling school-master and his lessons were remembered, because his government was energetic. Horace, who felt his blows, has celebrated his memory in immortal verse. Suetonius, in his account of illustrious grammarians, has described him. *Fuit autem naturae acerbae, non modo in antisophistas quos omni sermone laceravit, sed etiam in discipulos.* He was a whipper, and severe with his scholars —*ferula cecidit.*

* Hor. Epist. Lib. II., Ep. 1, Line 70.

Juvenal alludes to the same punishment. (See Sat. I. l. 15.) *Et nos ergo manum ferulae subduximus. We too have pulled away our hands when the master was clapping us.* Augustine, one of the lights of Christianity, speaks thus in his confessions. "Discipline is needful to overcome our puerile sloth, and this also is a part of thy government over thy creatures, O God, for the purpose of restraining our sinful impetuosity. From the ferules of masters to the trials of martyrs, thy wholesome severities may be traced, which tend to recal us to thee from that pernicious voluptuousness by which we departed from thee." Milner's Church History, Vol. II. p. 296; Armstrong's edition.

Melancthon, the great restorer of learning, the amiable and pious reformer, has left us his testimony: — *Ego habui praeceptorem qui fuit excellens grammaticus. Ille adegit me ad grammaticum, et ita adegit ut constructiones facerem. Cogebat reddere regulas constructionis per versus Mantuani viginti aut triginta. Nihil patiebatur me omittere; quoties errabam, dabat plagas mihi; et tamen ea moderatione quae erat conveniens. Ita me fecit grammaticum. Erat vir optimus; delexit me ut filium, et ego eum ut patrem; et brevi convenimus, spero in vita eterna.* See Melchor Adams's Life of the German Theologians, p. 328. "I had a master," says this mild reformer and best of men, "who was an excellent grammarian. He compelled me to the study; he made me write Greek and give the rules in twenty or thirty verses of the Mantuan. He suffered me to omit nothing, and whenever I made a blunder, he whipped me soundly, and yet with proper moderation. So he made me a grammarian. He was one of the best of men; he loved me like a son, and I loved him like a father, and I hope we shall both meet in heaven."

The quaint Fuller sanctions the same doctrine. In describing the good school-master, he says: — "He is moderate

in inflicting deserved correction, though he questions whether all the whipping in the world can make their parts, which are naturally sluggish, rise one minute before the hour nature hath appointed." Holy State, Book II. Chap. 16.

Dr. Johnson had felt the severities of the pedagogue, and gave us on this subject not only his opinions, but his experience.

"Mr. Langton one day asked him how he had acquired so accurate a knowledge of the Latin, in which I believe he was exceeded by no man of his time. He said, My master whipped me very well; without that, Sir, I should have done nothing. He told Mr. Langton that while Hunter was flogging his boys unmercifully, he used to say, 'And this I do to save you from the gallows.' Johnson upon all occasions expressed his approbation of enforcing instruction by means of the rod. 'I would rather,' said he, 'have the rod to be the general terror to all, to make them learn, than to tell a child, if you do thus or thus, you shall be more esteemed than your brothers or your sisters. The rod produces an effect which terminates in itself.'" Boswell's Life, Vol. I. p. 20.

Dr. Goldsmith reiterates: "Whatever pains a master may take to make the learning of the languages agreeable to his pupil, he may depend upon it, it will be at first extremely unpleasant. The rudiments of every language, therefore, must be given as a task, not as an amusement. Attempting to deceive children into instruction of this kind is only deceiving ourselves; and I know no passion capable of conquering a child's natural laziness but fear. Solomon has said it before me, nor is there any more certain, though perhaps disagreeable truth, than the proverb in a verse too well known to be repeated on the present occasion. It is very probable that parents are told of some masters who never use the rod, and are consequently thought the properest instructers for

their children; but though tenderness is a requisite quality in an instructer, yet there is too often the truest tenderness in well-timed correction." (Goldsmith's Works, Vol. IV. pp. 220–21.) Sir Walter Scott has some remarks of similar tendency in the beginning of Waverly; and Coleridge tells us he was soundly and profitably whipped in his youth for being an infidel. "Had my preceptor argued with me, it would only have gratified my vanity," says he; "a whipping was the very thing that my ignorance needed." We have here, then, the names of Socrates, Xenophon, Horace, Suetonius, Juvenal, Augustine, Melancthon, Fuller, Johnson, Goldsmith, Scott and Coleridge, on the other side of the question. The list might be extended almost indefinitely. Let them be thrown into one scale, and Horace Mann and his coadjutors mount the other; we are fearless for the result, and the world shall never know from our lisping testimony who kicks the beam.

In youth the passions are strong, the reason is weak, and the experience almost nothing. It is impossible for a child to penetrate into futurity, and see the sublime motives which even the man, after years of experience, very imperfectly conceives, and still more imperfectly acts upon. If the sensual predominates over the intellectual in the sage and the philosopher, how much more in those whom the laws of nature and of nature's God have reduced to the lowest scale of reasoning intelligence. The necessity of overcoming sloth by pain, arises partly from the sensuality of our nature, partly from the very structure of the youthful mind, which must be taught to see future evil in a concentrated symbol. We give them a less amount of suffering in order to make them avoid a greater; and we give it to them not only in justice, but the highest mercy. Every well constructed mind, like Melancthon's, when informed by experience, looks back on the school-boy hours, and thanks his teacher,

not only for his *lessons*, but his *blows*. It is not the smallest evil of the philanthropist's moon-shiny speculations, that it teaches children to cherish resentment for correction, for which they ought to feel the deepest gratitude and love.

As to the idea that the natural curiosity which all children feel is sufficient, when well directed, to lead common minds and all minds to the sublimest heights of knowledge, it is a dream, which can only enter the mind left to compare the universe to a toy-shop. What is this natural instinct for knowledge, and to what objects does it lead? It may teach a boy to find a bird's nest; to shoot flying; to drive a stage; or it may induce him to give attention to any other of those athletic sciences which are the sport rather than the business of human creatures. It may help a youth through a novel, or teach him to learn a ballad, and especially to learn all the licentious parts of the physiology of the human frame.

In its best state it can only direct some peculiar minds to some single congenial department. No doubt Paganini learned to fiddle by his instinctive fondness for that kind of knowledge. Garrick probably learned acting, and West painting, in a similar way. In its best impulses, it can only operate on peculiar minds; and that not to the whole circle of knowledge, but in some one peculiar direction. Burns was a poet; and it is likely he learned poetry by a spontaneous industry; other knowledge, like other mortals, he got by painful effort.

It is well known that some men have become eminent in some sciences, which at first were exceedingly disgusting to them. Knowledge may be compared to a garden full of delicious fruits and flowers, but surrounded with a thorny fence. We must break through with painful scratches before we can sit under the comfort of its shades, or hear its water-falls break on the ear. It is like the representation which the old geog-

raphers give of the *still vexed Bermoothes;* the most dreadful tempests roared around its shores — perpetual thunders rocked its skies, and unclassified monsters tumbled in its seas. The voyager could scarcely land there without being stranded; but, once safe ashore, and he was met by the breezes of an unfading spring, and regaled with the fruits of an everlasting autumn. Now, a theorist may attempt to alter the elements of nature as well as the elements of education. If he tries to peddle out his goods at a cheaper rate than the wholesale Author of the universe has imported them from the boundless regions of his own omniscience, he will become a bankrupt in the end. His cheats will be detected, and his wares sink even to a lower price than his own valuation of them.

Perhaps the place where Mr. Mann's theories are best carried out is among the Indians. There we can easily imagine, that the instinctive love of such knowledge as they teach is adequate to all the purposes of education. They never whip their children, (any more than they do at the Lexington Normal School,) never stimulate their emulation by setting before them the high prizes of life; never mortify their vanity, and never teach them the alphabet; they are taught *things* not *words;* how to entrap the deer; how to cast the tomahawk; and, we have no doubt, the process of education is all smooth and delightful.

But, pray, is this facility owing to their superior wisdom, or a deplorable want of conceptions of the high objects after which an immortal and intellectual being should strive? No doubt puerile instincts will carry a boy to some species of instruction. But we shall prize it higher, and recommend it more, when we find it has ever made a Coke or a Newton.

"*Believe*," says Coleridge, "in order that you may *know*." The incipient stages of education, (except to some few

remarkable minds, like Paschal's or Barratier's,) never can be made delightful. No doubt, in the subsequent stages, the fruit comes with the labor, just as the farmer may eat the apples while he gathers them, though for some years he must plant and prune an unbearing tree. The effect of the modern schemes must be to dwarf the intellect; if it is always delightful for a boy to learn, he will of course only learn what is delightful. Now there is skill in all things — in pitching coppers, in packing cards, and, as the proverb says, even in roasting an egg.

All this, however, is below the consideration of our sublime Secretary. He sees no difficulty in making the veriest infant appreciate the value of all the learning he is called to acquire. You can put the sublimest motives into the meanest mind. When a man has got upon his sublimities, you must shoot him flying, or there is no bringing him down to a conception of earthly difficulties or practical prudence. To visit our earth, like the *winged messengers who bestride the lazy-pacing clouds, and to excite the white, upturned*, wondering eyes of mortals, that *fall back to gaze on him*, is sometimes the beginning and end of his mission. We present to the sober experience of every man, woman and child in the State, the following labored paragraph; and we will consent to be called fools for ever, if, with whatever eloquence it may seem to be written, it is not acknowledged to lack one species — the eloquence of truth.

"'School Discipline,' is a comprehensive phrase, signifying the vast range of means and motives by which the bad passions of children may be overcome, and by which, also, their character, so far as school influences are capable of doing it, may be cultivated and trained into symmetry, loveliness, strength, honor, veracity, justice, reverence, and immortal blessedness. This subject, then, introduces us at once into the presence of a vast assemblage of measures and appliances, from the low motive that controls the craven and the brute,—the fear of

bodily smart,— up to social, personal, filial, domestic considerations, and from these to the hallowed and immortal influences of morality and religion. Whoever looks at this momentous theme, at all with the eye of a philosopher or a moralist, sees this vast and various assemblage of motives and means, arranged, as it were, upon an immense scale, one end of which measures the force of impulses that belong to the brute, while the other reaches to the aspirations of the highest spirit that bows before the Eternal Throne. It is a scale, which, like the ladder seen in the vision of the patriarch, reaches from earth to heaven. The teacher called to preside over children, and to mingle his influences in the formation of their character, looks up and down along this scale, where all persuasives and dissuasives are orderly arranged; and he selects, as his favorite instruments, such as find their strongest affinities in his own nature. If he be a 'lover of God and friend of human kind,' then his prayerful desires and longings are, to select his motives from the loftiest of the series, that he may thereby inspire his pupils with the spirit of those two great commandments on which hang all the law and the prophets,— first, the love of God with all the heart, and soul, and mind; and second, the love of our neighbor as ourselves, which divine authority has declared to be like unto the first. If, however, the teacher be stricken with a madness for worldly distinction, and power, and display; if he is one who can forget the desolations of war in the splendors of a triumph; if he can be blind to the atrocities of the slave-trade while doting upon the regal wealth which it yields; if he can gaze with envy upon elevated political station without scorning the meanness or moral profligacy by which it may have been reached, then he will goad on his pupils by the fiery incentives of ambition, and will cherish those rivalries in the school-room, which shall afterwards grow into overreachings in the market-place, and corruption in the senate-chamber. I remember once hearing a very distinguished writer and college teacher in this country say, while advocating emulation in school, that it was the only way to give dramatic interest and glory to the history of the race. 'Without emulation,' exclaimed he, deprecatingly, 'there would be no Cæsars, no Napoleons; society would dwindle down into tameness, or consist only of such men as Fenelon and Dr. Channing.' And if, to give one more specification, if the prevailing attributes in the teacher's character be pride, the love of domination, a morbid sensitiveness about his own personal importance, which converts the condemnation of a principle into a purposed indignity, and applies it to himself, — if that character includes, also, a recklessness of all sacrifices, however boundless, by

which the lust of 'authority' can be sated, then, out of this vast scale of motives, which measures the distance between the brute and the angel, he will select, and bring out, and defend, the lowest of them all, — absolute, unexplaining sovereignty, or 'authority,' on his own side; absolute, unreasoning subjection on the side of the pupil; — and the doctrines advocated and 'worshipped' by him will be, that both the sovereignty and the subjection shall be maintained by fear, and the infliction of physical pain."

This is sublime; so sublime as to be above the clouds, and up to the moon. All this vast scale of motives is susceptible of being put into the mind of a baby. You must not use the rod, because there is a vast chain of motives reaching from the throne of the Eternal down to the Normal School at Lexington. It is like a ladder, and some stand on one round and some on another. The teacher, called to preside over children, looks up and down along this scale, and perhaps becoming a little giddy as he approaches the top, he selects the highest motive to influence the lowest mind. At any rate, having such a copious store, imported from all time and all eternity, it is very strange if he cannot dispense with the rod, which lies crushed beneath the ladder, and bruised under its feet. The only difficulty is to conceive how a little child is to climb up this immense ladder, and reach and reap these celestial rewards. It reminds us of the Irishman, who, boasting of his country, told the Yankee that their bees were as big as oxen. "But what sort of hives do you have?" said the Yankee. "O, just such as yours." "But," said the curious Yankee, "how do your bees get into them?" "Arrah," says Paddy, "that is their look out." The motives of New England and the hives of Ireland, may go together.

Let us be understood. We are no advocates for unnecessary severity. Our consciences acquit us of ever having struck, intentionally, one needless blow. We are even will-

ing that every school-master should enter his domain with the secret purpose in his own breast, of governing without corporal punishment, *if he can.* It has always been our experiment. But we can scarcely conceive of a more miserable situation, than that of a poor pedagogue, put into a school of unruly boys, in a district already infected with the new theories; the children already spoiled, by the *perfection* of parental discipline; the rod denounced as a sprig of the dark ages; and it being proclaimed, by sound of trumpet, that its use is a measure of the teacher's want of skill, he is set to work. We can hardly conceive of a condition more degrading and discouraging; and, in our hottest vengeance against the new philanthropists, the greatest curse we can wish them, (although it is almost too bad,) is *to be put into it.* Even Horace Mann might be benefitted by the event.

The wisdom that discards the rod, is excessively afraid of emulation. Reformation is universal; it cuts up all experience by the roots. It makes no distinction, and it equally discards that emulation which is for things laudable, and is regulated by justice, with that which is excessive, and leads to frivolous distinctions and bad results. For ourselves, we think, *when the merit can be exactly measured,* some portion of emulation leads to salutary exertion, and has no bad influence on the heart. Take the case of spelling for example, the grade of honor is easily ascertained; the degree of merit is various, from the head of the class, to one remove from the bottom. What child was ever injured by it: and what spelling has not been improved? It cannot be rank poison, for all New England has survived it. The heroes of the revolution passed through this pernicious process; and a Franklin, a Washington, a Warren, a Mather, and an Edwards, are its fruits. It is true, there may be a feverish passion, excited by a false application of this principle;

just as a truckman may abuse his horse with his whip. But has the city of Boston ever made an ordinance that no truckman shall carry a whip?

We may ask, too, where is this reform to stop? If emulation is so poisonous to boys, why not pernicious to men? The school is a little world; and education should be an epitome of what is to be hereafter. Must all the distinctions of life be abolished, because men may feel for them a dangerous emulation? Must there be no captains, colonels, nor esquires—no titles of honor—nor offices of respect; for those grown children, who are just as susceptible of being perverted, by the existence of this passion, as their younger images are by its abuse? Perhaps the very Board of Education itself may go in this moral reformation, and the very Secretary's office be abolished. One of our colleges, in the onward progress of the day, has abolished all distinction of parts on commencement day; and yet they have done but half their work; for they still continue to give diplomas to doctors of divinity; that is, under-graduates need no emulation to excite them to study; but grave preachers do. It is just as it should be; for, as Mrs. Quickly says in Shakspeare: "It is not good that children should know any wickedness; old folks you know have discretion, as they say, and know the world."

Mr. Mann, if we understand him, would put the rod into the school-master's hand, and say with great solemnity, I am no ultraist, I have never advocated the abandonment of its use. "After all other means have been tried, and tried in vain, the chastisement of pupils, found to be otherwise incorrigible, is still upheld by law, and sanctioned by public opinion." But then, remember, it is a *relic of barbarism.* Its use proves less that your pupils are guilty, than that you are a blunderhead.

"Through the ignorance of the laws of medicine, a parent may so corrupt the constitution of his child, as to render poison a necessary medicine, and through an ignorance of the laws of the mind, he may do the same thing in regard to punishment. When the arts of health and education are understood, neither poison nor punishment will need to be used, unless in most extraordinary cases." "The fear of bodily pain is a degrading motive." "These are motives taken from the nethermost part of the nethermost end of the scale of influences." Truly, here is an encouraging advocate. When these things are said, not merely to school-masters, but to every man, woman, and child, in the community, we shall soon have schools which only the inventor of the theory can govern. The implements of Solomon, and the wisdom of Solomon, must for ever be separated; and the passage be blotted from revelation, which says, *Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.* Proverbs, xix. 18. *It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.* Lam. iii. 27. Even Christ has said, *My yoke is easy*,—but still it is a yoke.

The worst feature about this miserable philosophy, is its prudery and *purism;* imposing on us a paper perfection, utterly inconsistent with life and manners. In contradicting God's word, it assumes the existence of a world which God never made. All its pupils are made of gingerbread, and so sweet, that none but a reformer, paid for his voracity, can ever swallow them. It falls in, too, with the weakness of the times; it has the skill of the devil, and tempts us on our feeble side. The fault of excessive democracy is a propensity to be captivated with bold experiments. As the majority decides, the people must be startled with some glittering theory; and the promise must be as large and as sublime, as the performance is mean and contemptible.

Now we can scarcely conceive of a man worse employed

than in catering to such a corrupted taste. He is tempting the people to the very precipice, to which they are forward enough to rush of their own accord. "Hypocrisy," says Burke, "of course delights in the most sublime speculations; for, never intending to go beyond speculation, it costs nothing to have it magnificent." While some few good men are using all honest arts to undeceive the people, endeavoring to rein in their extravagant fancy and recal their abused reason to the sober realities of life; while they are teaching them, that if they would secure a blessing they must pay the price for it; to find a roving demagogue, in the dress of a philanthropist, going about to counteract their efforts and to push delusion into fatal extravagance — Oh! it is beyond measure disgusting. Such a culprit deserves not the pillory — not the gallows; not the slander which he imputes, nor the flagellation which he removes — but what is infinitely more severe — he deserves to have his celestial robe taken away, and to be shown to the world in his mortal rags.

For our part, if it should be our lot ever to be on a school committee, and a candidate should appear before us, pretending to do all that Mr. Mann demands; that is, always to coax, never to whip; to govern only by these *high scale* motives; to lead all children to the heights of knowledge, by the instinctive love of learning; to discard the alphabet and yet teach the power of letters; never to distrust the word of a child, whatever might be his story, and never to allow them to mistake in a recitation; to discard emulation and the rod, and always to rule by seraphic love; and finally, to teach history, geometry, botany, philosophy, chemistry, astronomy, and metaphysics, in all the district schools; if such a pretender should come, we should condemn him on his own showing, and discard him at once; and in this we should imitate a shrewd farmer, who flourished in Roxbury some seventy years ago. There came along a fellow, who wished

to let himself, one day. The farmer asked him what he could do? and how much? "How much stone wall can you lay in a day?" "Oh, sixteen rods." "How much salt meadow can you mow in the same time?" "Two acres and an half." "How many cords of wood can you cut and chop, in the same time?" "Somewhere about seven." "Alas," said the farmer, wiping his mouth, "I cannot hire you; I never should find work enough for you to do; you had better go back to your native place, for there I suppose you are all equals."

As to the debasing influence which fear has on a child, we suspect it is all delusion and extravagance. Nothing is debasing which is natural, and fear is one of the legitimate motives of human life. God has made dangers; and made man, and made fear; and our sublime philosophy cannot alter his works. Besides, it is contradicted by fact. Where was there ever a more high-spirited nation, than Great Britain; all whose statesmen, generals, and admirals, were whipped at school? The character of Britain is not perfect, we are aware; but she offends much more by her pride and arrogance, than she does by meanness and servile debasement. All her heroes prove that the rod of childhood has not degraded them. The same may be said of our own revolutionary heroes. Rome was a corrupt nation; but certainly one of the most magnanimous of all antiquity. Yet we learn, both from Horace and from Juvenal, how her great men were educated. In the age of chivalry, a blow was worse than death; and yet, all these gallant knights had been whipped at school. The new theory must give us a long list of better examples, before we can forget the tree which has borne, in such rich profusion, such excellent fruit.

Such is the honorable Secretary as a theorist. Let us now consider whether he is a less visionary man, considered as a reporter of facts.

The Secretary must excuse us if our minds are perpetually recurring to Don Quixote, when we write of him. Now it was a remarkable feature in the knight-errant, that he saw all objects in the visible world through the glasses of his own theory. Windmills were giants, an inn was a castle, a swine-herd a herald, and the humble Dorothea a princess from the land of monkeys: it is a fine touch, too, in the genius of Cervantes, that, though the knight was the pattern of honor, and the very mirror of integrity, yet he would *lie in favor of chivalry.* No man need distrust his word in common life, though he told more lies than an electioneering newspaper, when he went down into Montesinos's cave. We have no doubt that Mr. Mann might have a conscience, and might be qualified for a witness in any court of law, provided he would lay aside his theories, look on this working-day world with some attention, be careful to see what really exists, and then report solely what he sees; and, finally, lay aside those delusive figures of speech which he candidly acknowledges are his besetting sins. "A redundancy of metaphor is a fault of my mind." "Did they know how much I strive against it, how many troops of rhetorical figures I drive away daily, and bar the door of my imagination against them, they would pity, rather than reproach me for this infirmity." (Reply, p. 46.) How many of these delusive figures he drives away we do not know, we only know how many he admits; and we will here only remark, that a man of his peculiar views, and who is so troubled with those thick-coming fancies that even he himself calls it *an infirmity*, is the last man we should choose to cross the Atlantic to report to us the state of foreign schools. If we have ever *reproached* him for a natural infirmity, we are sorry; and as for pity, we felt it long before his pathetic confession called for its increase.

Without disputing Mr. Mann's integrity, the judgment of

his best friends, who know him, will bear us out in saying, that he always sees all objects *in the light of his own opinions.* The coloring is as sure to come as the object is to be presented. Thus, when he describes the condition of the schools in Massachusetts, he paints them as being in the most deplorable state of depression; bad instructers, sleepy supervision; non-attendance; most of the pupils not able to read; old school-houses, (Augean stables,) and a Herculean labor to cleanse them. He piles up reports and testimonials without moderation or mercy. He says the school system was almost an entire failure — plenty of skulls that could not teach, and would not learn. In this night of desolation, I came; I spoke the word of order; I put the darkness to flight; I collected the information; I made the reports; I proposed my theories, and I established the normal schools. All was desolation before me, and all was a blooming Eden wherever I had trod. Far be it from us to sponge out the coloring of this delightful picture. It must be more pleasant for a good man to see the blessings he has scattered, than for a vain man to sound a trumpet to his own fame. One thing we cannot but remark — how easy it is to collect statistics to any point which an agent wishes to prove; it is but to set a few devoted followers to writing, and then to call their effusions reports; to cull all we like, and reject all that makes against us, and the work is done.

We happen to know whole towns, whole regions, where this mighty reformation is still a profound secret, and where they esteem it the very salvation of their schools, that their health has not been tampered with by the nostrums of Horace Mann. When he speaks of his labors, they are absolutely astonishing. Rasselas thought, when he heard Imlac's description of the qualifications for writing poetry, that no man could ever be a poet; and Mr. Mann has about convinced us, that no man ever performed the labors of Secre-

tary to the board of education. They would exhaust the strength of Samson and the patience of Job. If we believe them to have been done, it must be on Tertullian's argument, — *quia impossibile.*

"During the last seven years, I have published six large volumes of school Abstracts, which contain as much reading matter as five of the great volumes of Sparks's Life of Washington. These Abstracts contain selections from the school-committees' reports, principally manuscript, all of which I have carefully read. The reports of committees that I have examined for this purpose, I think would make, at least, fifteen such volumes as Sparks's Washington. In addition to this, I have revised all the tabular part of the Abstracts; and set myself down night after night to such mere mechanical work as was never before imposed upon any officer of the government. The tables of the Abstract for one year, I prepared without assistance. A competent judge has given it as his opinion, that what I have to do in preparing one of these volumes, is equal to six months' continuous labor, — working only ordinary hours. If it has employed me less time than this, it is because I have made little difference between day and night. During the same time, the Annual Reports which I have written, have amounted to eight hundred octavo pages. My correspondence has been at least three times as much as my Reports, — not a little of it being of a very difficult character, such as giving advice upon legal questions, &c. I have given advice (always gratuitous,) on at least a hundred legal questions; and thereby, as I trust, have saved many districts from all the mischievous consequences of litigation. I am now completing the sixth volume of the Common School Journal, every number of which, — with the exception of those issued during my six months' absence abroad, when it was in the hands of Mr. Emerson, — I have prepared. I have made five circuits over the Commonwealth, occupying, on an average, three months each. I have inspected great numbers of schools in Massachusetts, and have visited half the States in the Union, for the purpose of seeing their schools and examining into their systems of education, and have spent six months on a foreign tour. I trust, that, for whatever sins I may be called to render an account, *idleness* will not be among the number."

Now we will not make narrow exceptions — we will not cross-examine this witness, that testifies in his own favor

with as much truth perhaps as modesty. We only ask Mr. Mann to remember, that figures of speech and perhaps hyperboles are among his infirmities.

During his six months' tour through Europe, and his six weeks' *flight* through Germany, the same ardent fancy follows him.

His tongue is teeming with language, which, to be true, cannot be literal; figures of speech swarm around him too good to be rejected by his costly self-denial. Every thing corresponds to his own theory, and every example goes to confirm it. He sees schools where they whip girls for amusement, and schools where nothing but emulation and no emulation are practised. In Scotland they have the most intense excitement, and in Prussia the most Christian gentleness; no rod — no emulation — and no evils attending the absence of them. The deaf are taught to speak, and the dumb to sing; and the darkest night settles over the Austrian empire. Now other travellers tell different stories: more sober men see things in a different light. The Prussian school system needs examining. Austria is not, in point of learning, the prison-house of darkness he has represented her. She has been rising even since the battle of Wagram; and in Vienna, Schlegel gave his most acute and refined lectures on the English Shakspeare.

That some of the dumb may be taught to speak is probable; but that the scheme is so successful, as our traveller represents, is not only unlikely from its own evidence, but is actually confuted by better witnesses. The truth is, our Secretary loves the marvellous too well not to believe it. He forms his opinion; he looks on the world through it; every thing he sees goes to confirm it; and his six weeks' inspection of Saxony and Prussia only serves to send him back the same man he was before. He is the Munchausen of the moral world.

It is astonishing that any man awake should quote Mr. Mc Laren's letter as confirmatory of Mr. Mann's views. It is one of the politest pieces of contradiction we have ever seen. It is exquisite; it almost equals the art with which Mr. Mann praised us, when he was stabbing us under the fifth rib. "In saying that I think your likeness is correct, of course I understand you to mean, not that *all* the Scotch schools are taught in the able manner you describe; but those schools *you went to visit* in the large towns, and to which the most able teachers are drawn, by the superior advantages attending them, from all parts of Scotland, are taught in that able and energetic manner. If you had gone to visit the schools in country places, where, in many instances, extremely ill-qualified persons teach, you would, no doubt, have drawn another sketch, equally faithful to the life—but *it would have been very different.*" And then adds, "He had succeeded beyond what could be anticipated." Of course, in a friendly letter, no man wishes to give his friend the lie. Mr. McLaren writes like a man full of politeness, and not devoid of honesty; and then he very softly tells our Secretary, that his report, though very graphic, is not true, except in a very few instances. It is really to be wished, that we had more such letters. What might we know, what new testimonies might we discover, if some friend, equally discerning and equally faithful, should write from Holland, or Saxony, or Prussia?

The two capital errors which we have charged upon the Secretary, grow out of each other. The mind of strong hypotheses always sees facts in a false light. These errors are perfectly consistent with much sprightliness of language, much brilliancy of fancy, much forethought and much invention. They are even consistent with much perverted integrity. Every utterer of falsehoods is not a liar, nor is every bearer of false witness against his neighbor a breaker

of the ninth commandment. We impeach the *judgment* of Mr. Mann of high crimes and misdemeanors. We leave his heart to God. We say, that whilst he cherishes his present opinions, and aims at the extravagant innovations which his weakness is grasping, but which his strength never can execute, he is utterly unworthy of trust or confidence. Even his best intentions cannot rescue him from the most enormous mistakes.

The last thing to which we shall call a moment's attention, is, the points at issue between himself and us.

He begins his pamphlet by saying that he had no intention of casting any reflection; that our conclusions are wiredrawn and superfluous; that the Boston teachers have been excited by their own sensitiveness; and that he has uniformly treated all men with delicacy and respect. But is it possible for a man, holding his opinions, to look on teachers devoted to other practices, and not mean *them* in the promiscuous censures which he has thrown so repeatedly and so severely round the world? Was his bow drawn at a venture? and was it strange that we should feel a sense of injury at the promulgation of plans which we think we know to be impossible? We have never asserted, we do not suppose, that the Secretary means us more than a hundred other teachers, who know, by bitter experience, that all valuable education is a slow process, and that useful labors in this line are seldom attended with splendid results.

But the truth is, his sanguine temperament, his redundant fancy, his brilliant anticipations, his metaphorical language, whether rejected or received, his *acknowledged infirmity*, is calculated to pour contempt on all rational measures and men, whether he is conscious of it or not. Even the tears of his mercy are bitter sarcasms, and the balm of restoration which he sheds into the wound he has made, is infused by the very rod which he denies to us all.

We confess that we did more than hint, with more truth perhaps than courtesy, that there was a reciprocation of quoting and praising between certain modern philanthropists. It was uncivil, we allow; and we are much more convinced of our want of politeness in this matter, than our want of honesty. But how does the Secretary escape from our ungentlemanlike hint. Why, he says Dr. Howe is too good a man to hear such things suggested; and then he runs off upon our reasoning, which, after all, turns out to be our language.

"Mr. Mann has said, 'men are generally very willing to modify or change their opinions or views, while they exist in thought merely, but when once formally expressed, the language chosen often becomes the mould of the opinion. The opinion fills the mould, but cannot break it and assume a new form.'"

To this, in order to make an application of my doctrine, I added, "Thus errors of thought and of life, originate *in impotence of language.*" "O, blindness to the future," not always "kindly given;" little did I think that I was preparing a net, in which not only myself, but my friend Dr. Howe, was to be ensnared. Yet see how the doctrine, that ignorant nations and ignorant men suffer from a scanty or an unintelligible vocabulary, is applied to us. See what subsequent errors in our lives, are traceable to our "impotence of language." Hear the "Remarks."

"May it not be in accordance with such a principle, that Dr. Howe, before the American Institute, in 1841, defended the Normal Schools in Massachusetts, with more than gladiatorial ardor; he having before spoken of the school at Lexington in this manner: it is 'the best school I ever saw in this or any other country.' And does Mr. Mann wish to be made an exception to his own rule; when, in his seventh annual report, on his return from Europe, he says: 'I have seen no Institution for the Blind, equal to that under the care of Dr. Howe, at South Boston;' which Mr. Mann had before pronounced 'the first of its kind' 'throughout the civilized world.' The Hon. Secretary cannot complain, if those of whom he expressed such unfavorable opinions before he went 'to some new quarter of the horizon' for 'a brighter beam of light,' avail themselves in self-defence of his own rules to preserve their influence."

That is, Dr. Howe, in his letter before referred to, of March 9, 1840, having spoken in praise of the Lexington Normal School, and having shaped his opinion in that form of words, *had no language*, in which he could express a different opinion afterwards; and therefore, unless he enlarges his vocabulary, will be constrained to repeat the same thing for ever; and I, through poverty or unintelligibleness of speech, having expressed an opinion in favor of the Blind Institution, in February, 1841, and having no other phraseology, on my return from Europe, was led to express an opinion cast in the old "mould," and so to commend it again. See pp. 18–19 for this logic of Thirty-one Boston School-masters! No wonder it took so many men to *draw* such an inference.

The beautiful pun with which this paragraph closes, must not blind us to the sophistry which has thus shifted the question. The greatest mould in language that ingenuity ever made, is when she is incited by vanity and interest. If Mr. Mann cannot understand our object, we will not force his attention to a mortifying truth. Whatever may have been the motive, it is still a fact, that two great men have mutually quoted and praised each other. Nor is this a solitary case, nor is the admiration confined to the dual number. The most exquisite praise is to be *laudatus a viro laudato*, and here we have it. Unless some better proof is offered, it will still be suspected that somewhere nearer than old Rome, the following farce has been acted with *infinite applause*, as the play bills say.

Frater erat Romæ consulti rhetor; ut alter
Alterius sermone meros audiret honores:
Gracchus ut hic illi foret, huic ut Mucius ille.
Qui minus argutos vexat furor iste poetas?
Carmina compono, hic elegos mirabile visu.

Hor. Epist. Lib. II., Ep. 2d.

Passing by many other things of various moment, we come to the controversy between Mr. Mann and us, respecting the use of the alphabet in teaching children to read. We were

not aware that we were so very ridiculous in our views on this subject. He informs us that "the subject is ground down and pulverized into impalpability, beyond microscopic vision. Had it been the unaided production of a single mind, the subtlety and evanescence of its refinements might have been less; now I know not how otherwise to describe it, than as the doctrine of metaphysics applied to the almost endless anomalies of the alphabet. An attempt to individualize the atomical parts of this section, and to give an answer to each, would be like attempting to beat back a square league of sea-fog, by hitting each particle with the sharpened end of a rod. I shall content myself, therefore, with endeavoring to find some nuclei rarified into less metaphysical tenuity than the general mass, and striking at them."

We are sorry that we are not better understood; without availing ourselves of the obvious maxim that intelligibility is always a ratio between the reader's powers of conception and the writer's perspicuity, we shall endeavor to be a little more plain and shed some light on this foggy subject.

Mr. Mann had, in his seventh annual report, and in divers lectures and written articles, brought forward with great pomp, what he called the new method of teaching children to read. He had said, with his usual exaggeration, it generally took a year or six months to teach children the alphabet; and that this year or six months, was as good as lost; he had said emphatically that he "despaired of any effective improvement in teaching young children to read, until the teachers of our primary schools should qualify themselves to teach in this manner." He gave it a new name — the *lautir* or *phonic* method; and declared that it was universally adopted in Prussia. He said, moreover, that "the simple sounds of the letters, if analyzed, amount to hundreds — that teaching the letters was a real impediment; and were it not for keeping up his former habits of speaking at home, and in

the play-ground, the teacher, during the six months or year in which he confines him to the twenty-six sounds of the alphabet, would pretty nearly deprive him of the faculty of speech." He says, moreover, that "in regard to the vowels when found in words, they receive only occasionally the sounds which the child is taught to give them as letters; and in regard to consonants, that they never in any case receive the sound which the child is taught to affix to them." "I believe," continues he, "it is within bounds to say that we do not sound the letters in reading once in a hundred times, as we are taught to sound them when learning the alphabet." Such absurdities, according to him, demanded an immediate reform; and though all nations, in all ages, with an undeviating experience, had adopted an alphabet, which expressed nothing, and was only an impediment, (for even the Chinese, after all, have their vocal letters,) yet our age was summoned to upset universal experience, and open a new and more flowery avenue to the temple of knowledge.

These positions we ventured to question, and we gave our reasons. Our arguments may have been a square league of sea-fog, (cubic measure;) but our conclusions are the experience of ages. We ventured to say, that it seemed to us that Mr. Mann had confounded the name-sounds of letters with their powers. The only modification we shall make in our remarks, is, that, in giving the names to letters, the inventors of language *included the predominant and most usual power in the name as well as they could.* There is the same compression of the lips in sounding the name of B, as there is when we use the letter b, in a word. When we sound the letter L, we touch the tongue to the roof of the mouth, as we do when we express its power in the word *tell.* The sounds of the consonants are exceedingly fugitive and evanescent, and we must catch them in the elementary signal as well as we can. This gives the child some idea of what

the power is; he must go on and modify it, in those long columns of antiquated nonsense, which the Secretary quotes only to condemn. And let us tell him, (if it is not presumptuous for such castigated pupils as we are, to turn instructers to a master so confident in his opinions,) if language, as he says, (though it is one of Mr. Mann's figures of speech,) consists of hundreds of elementary sounds, and if he could invent hundreds of symbols to express them, and should he endeavor to nail down each simple sound to each written symbol, he would find it impossible. New deviations would rise up. His five hundred letters of an alphabet would be just as uncertain and ambiguous as they are now. It seems to us, the old method is remarkably philosophic, and such as we shall have to invent over again, when Mr. Mann's improvements have cast it into oblivion. First, we have an alphabet which involves in the name the prevailing power of the letter, (for it is not true that we do not sound the name-power once in a hundred times when we read.) Then we teach the varying power in those columns which our reformer ridicules. *Ba*, *be*, *bi*, *bo*, *bu*, *by*, &c. Then in longer words, until, partly by imitation and partly by the light which imperfect symbols can give, the children thus learn to read. So we all learned; and so the world will continue to be taught, when the theories of the day have had their wonder and are gone to the dust.

The fact must be conceded, that if the sounds of letters are half so numerous as Mr. Mann supposes, it is a very tenuous line that distinguishes them; they melt into each other. This is clear from the different numbers that speculatists have given them. Dr. Rush says, 35; Mr. Barber, 43; Mr. Mann, hundreds. Certainly, when such men disagree, some of the sounds must be marvellously alike. Why not then continue to include such slight differences in a single letter, teaching the generic and prevailing sound in the

symbol and the shades of difference in the practice. This is the method which experience will force upon us at last. The use of a letter is like the use of gold or silver in money; it has a value in use and a value in currency; and the value in use lays the foundation for the value in currency. And so a letter becomes a useful symbol, because its name has always some bearing on its power.

It is impossible to reduce education to a metaphysical method. We must sometimes anticipate, and talk to children what they do not know, if we expect them to advance. The teaching the alphabet, were it all that Mr. Mann calls it, would not be a whit more absurd, than the manner in which we are obliged to proceed in teaching a child to talk. We speak to it, without giving it the means of understanding language. We rattle over verbs, nouns, pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, interjections, into the ear of the veriest baby; we assume what we know is impossible — that the little pupil understands what we give it no means of knowing. The whole science of education among nurses and mothers needs reforming, just as much as the absurdity of the alphabet does among primers and school-mistresses. This is our solemn opinion; and we humbly recommend to the Secretary that the next gimcrack he gets into his head, should be, to sound an alarm on this important subject. Let him show the absurdity of talking to babies a language which they cannot understand; that it is an actual impediment to put into their hands, Mother Goose's Melodies; that *high diddle diddle, the cat's in the fiddle,* is PREPOSTEROUS to a mind that knows not what a cat or a fiddle is; and that a philosophic education can never perfect men, until it begins with the very cradle.

We thought that Mr. Mann confounded the name-sound of a letter with its power. We think so still. We said that he exaggerated the number of simple sounds. We say

so still. We believe that he misrepresented Mr. Worcester. We are inveterate in that opinion. Our article is before the people; and if we have misrepresented him more than he has us, or have heaped on him half the contempt, our humiliation shall be complete.

But after all, this wonderful system, so lauded in the report, seems to dwindle amazingly when we come to the reply. It would seem as though the author shrunk a little from the consequences of his own extravagance; and the alphabet, which was such an impediment, becomes a help-meet after all. He does not discard the use; he only helps it forward by a few pictures. Let the reader peruse, and compare the following:

"The idea that the 'new system,' as advocated by Mr. Pierce, myself and others, postpones the learning of the alphabet, and of course spelling, until after *seven hundred* words are learned, is kept before the reader's mind, throughout the section. (See pp. 60, 63, 92, 102.) Now the facts that invalidate this representation, stand conspicuously out, in the very productions from which it professes to be derived. In the 'Primer' referred to, there are only about one hundred words, before the first story or reading lesson; and the instructions to teachers contained in the author's preface, are, 'Before all the words are learned that belong to the first story, the child may be taught several letters, such as s, t, v, b, d,' &c. 'Some children will soon inquire out all the letters, and as soon as they are known, it is well to let them spell the words,' &c. 'There is no doubt that the sooner spelling is begun, intelligently, the better,' &c. Yet with these directions before them, the Thirty-one allege, that according to our plan, 'the alphabet, as such, is kept entirely concealed;' and also, that the child, 'after learning either seven hundred, a thousand, or two thousand words,' is then, '*if ever*,' to learn how to spell.

"Mr. Pierce, in the lecture from which the quotation in the 'Remarks' is made, says, 'After the scholars are able to manage with ease, simple sentences, such as are found in Gallaudet's and Worcester's Primers, Bumsted's First Book, or Swan's Primary Reader, let them be taught the names and sounds, or powers of letters.' Now the first sentence in Gallaudet's Primer is, '*Frank had a dog; his name was Spot.*' In Worcester's it is, '*A nice fan.*' In Bumsted's 'First Book,' the first sentence has twenty different, but very simple words; the

second has only six. In Swan's, it is, '*I can make a new cage.*' Mr. Pierce's direction therefore, is, 'After the scholars are able to manage with ease, such simple sentences' as the above, 'let them be taught the names and sounds of letters.' What an outrage then, was it to say, that Mr. Pierce would postpone the teaching of letters, until after 'two thousand,' or 'one thousand,' or 'seven hundred,' whole words had been learned, and *then*, 'IF EVER,' begin 'to combine letters into words.' Must a child learn *seven hundred words* before he can read, 'A nice fan,' or other similar sentences? Take the common type, in which this Reply is printed, and I doubt whether seven hundred different words can be found on any *three full pages* in it.

"Still more enormous is the statement in relation to the 'Primer,' which is said to be my 'standard;' for, according to the directions contained in that, about a fifth part of the letters were to be learned, by or before the time that *one* hundred words were to be; and in regard to spelling, which, of course, must be subsequent to learning the letters, it says, 'There is no doubt, that the sooner it is begun, intelligently, the better.' Yet the 'Remarks' say, 'What surprises us most, if this be the meaning, is that Mr. Mann should discover from such defective instruction, reasons for a *total* neglect of the alphabet.' The italicising of the word *total*, is not mine; the 'Remarks' themselves give it this emphasis of falsehood. What an exorbitant misrepresentation, on the threshold of the section, of my views and of the views of those with whom I agree!"

Now it seems to us, that our antagonist is reduced to this dilemma; he has invented something, or he has not. He has a great improvement to introduce, or only a harmless modification. If all he means to say, is — that before you teach a child the alphabet, you may hang up a few pictures with a few words, and you may use these for a time as auxiliary to learning the letters; he has no dispute with us; all this is very harmless and very safe. But then, what becomes of his pompous representations in his reports; of his despairing to see any improvement in the primary schools until the new method is adopted; of his anxious inquiry in Prussia; of his solemn eloquence against past folly, and of his earnest advocacy, (to use one of his own words,) for a new improve-

ment. If a man claims the credit of being a reformer, he must hazard the martyrdom to which his heroism may lead him. It is a mean business to seek the glory, without hazarding the disgrace.

One thing is certain, that all persons who have tampered with the alphabet, have found their schemes pass to oblivion. Arbitrary monarchs have labored in vain to change the *usus loquendi*. In such cases, the burden of proof lies heavily on the innovator; and he generally is a man of narrow ambition and petty wisdom. The very Wilkins, whom Mr. Mann quotes, was the bishop, who, after having excogitated a new alphabet, projected a flight to the moon. Dr. Franklin, (a wise man will have his follies,) devised a new mode of spelling. He thought that wife should be spelt, *yf*. Many such plans, the schemes of a day, have passed away, like the visions of the night. It requires no very great reach of prophecy to foretell, that the alphabet will still continue to be taught when our schools shall be advanced beyond the utmost aspirations of a reformer's millenium.

There runs through all the Secretary's speculations, the same feature of super-refined and super-sublime impracticableness. His suns always glitter too much to give us any guiding light. Thus he is pleased to see the teacher so perfect in his lesson as to discard the text-book; a practice rather calculated to astonish the spectator, than to benefit the pupil. We once saw a remarkable exemplification of the truth of this remark. A tutor in one of our colleges took a class through the whole of Horace, without ever looking into the book. His eyes were defective, and he chose to trust his memory, and he did the thing remarkably well; and every body admired his proficiency. And yet he had better have had his book before him; for we repeatedly caught him tripping. To-day he wonderfully detected an idle scholar; to-morrow, he was deceived. If we remember right, Dr.

Vicessimus Knox, an old teacher, says just the reverse to Horace Mann, on this subject. No matter how well versed the teacher is in his lesson, let him always have his book before him. It is certainly the safest, if not the most splendid course.

To prevent mistakes, we may give a short view of the points at issue between the Secretary and ourselves. He thinks that man is endowed with such a thirst for knowledge, and it so early develops itself, that by this natural curiosity, he may be led voluntarily and delightfully to universal erudition. We believe no such thing; however pleasant the acquisition of knowledge may be in certain stages of advancement, it must be laborious at first. He seems to think the pupil is always sucking in direct knowledge. We believe he must spend much time in procuring the counters and vehicles of knowledge. He thinks that corporal punishment is seldom or never to be used; and is always an index of the teacher's defective skill; we think it is a DIVINE INSTITUTION; and is always to be applied when authority is resisted, and other means of enforcing it fail. He thinks it is *a relic of barbarism;* we believe in the eternal law of God. He thinks that Solomon spoke imperfect wisdom to a barbarous age; we believe that all Scripture was given by inspiration of God. He thinks there is a great difference between the law and the Gospel, in this respect; we see no such distinction. Our Savior made a whip of cords, and drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple. He totally discards emulation; we believe it must exist, and the safest way is to acknowledge and regulate it. He dislikes text books; we believe it is the safest way for a teacher to have them. He thinks that the alphabet should not be taught first, and that by discarding it, common schools may be led on to botany, chemistry, &c.; we think a fewer number of studies, (especially in schools kept only for three months in

the year,) would be a safer course. He thinks there are hundreds of elementary sounds to letters; we believe that it is one of his own figures of speech. He thinks that scholars should be kept wakeful, by almost perpetual recitation; we believe that some studies are best learned by mixing the hours of recitation with solitary diligence. He thinks he saw most of his plans carried into the most successful operation in the Prussian schools; we believe, if he did, he saw these things *through his own eyes.* In short, he believes, under his supervision, that miracles are to be wrought in education; and we believe that the age of miracles is past. We submit it to the world, who is right; but at any rate our fall cannot be a very disgraceful one; for we shall fall, if our opponent conquers, with Melancthon, Luther, Locke, Johnson, and Goldsmith, with the pages of inspiration and the experience of every age, except our own.

We certainly believe that the science of education is susceptible of improvement. We allow that there have been great defects in the New England schools, and many deficient teachers. We rejoice in every wise effort made to elevate them. Perhaps, polemic bitterness might impel us to say, that we have never derived any benefit from the writing or doings of the Secretary of the Board of Education. *We do not say it.* We believe that he has done good; he has collected some information; he has gone through much labor, and he has sometimes in sprightly language and with abundant metaphor, called the public attention to the subject. Let him have his reward. No asperity of language; no bitterness of contempt; no attempted ridicule, shall ever force us to an act of injustice or lead us to wish to deprive him of any praise or profit, which justice or gratitude may assign him. The workman is worthy of his hire. But it is our deliberate opinion that *the good he has done, bears no proportion to the harm that is to follow*, and must follow, if

he retain his present opinions. He is not the man for detail; for carrying out a productive plan. He sees every object in a blazing, but indefinite light. His moral torch may be compared to a tar-barrel; an excellent thing to hoist on a pole and to give an alarm at midnight. But who wishes, and who can read the mandates of wisdom and the records of experience, by its red and flaring light. His days are numbered. He will as certainly leave the Secretaryship, as the people will recover their wisdom. The cupidity of the public has not borne the expense of his office very patiently, and certainly popular frugality has no superfluous moneys to throw away.

We write these things in no malice. We have blotted our paper with full as many tears as our compassionate enemy has shed over our aberrations. Perhaps Mr. Mann is less in fault than we suppose. His position is an unfortunate one. Think of a man hired and paid for a certain amount of invention. Nothing to do but to devise some new schemes, and the plan to be totally separated from the execution! Every cent of his salary seems to be paid for splendid inventions. We have very little respect for any plan in which the proposer has no responsibility in the execution. Every man needs that regulator to keep him from extravagance. "Who would be placed in such a situation;" said Bonaparte to the Abbé Seyes, when he brought forward his scheme for a grand elector, "who would fatten like a pig on a splendid salary, when he has no share in the Government?" We beg leave to say, if Mr. Mann would step down from his eminence and take a small share of our toils and discouragements, he might view education in a different light. He might find that we live in a very dark and sensual world, where no scheme of perfection is likely to be executed. He might find that the school-master's passage is in a rugged road, where toils, and difficulties, and sorrows, and dangers beset him on every

side; he might find that there are sluggish pupils that he must carry along as he can; that he must be willing to work much to accomplish little; here a little and there a little; line upon line, and precept upon precept. He might learn to pour the vials of his scorn upon other heads, than those who are already sinking under some of the heaviest burdens that the severity of Heaven ever imposed on the weakness of man.

The Secretary has not always held his office with universal acceptance. Murmuring sounds are heard on every side; and some ask the terrible question, WHAT GOOD IS HE DOING? The unlucky Thirty-One by no means stand alone. Whatever contempt our haughty foe may have for our influence or opinion; with whatever scorn or indignation he may look down from his specular mount on our grovelling views or feeble opposition; we can tell him there are numbers who think with us. The party is increasing; and the time may come when the head of his reputation may lie as low in dust as he supposes he has prostrated us. *The lofty looks of Man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of Man shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the Lord of Hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low; and upon all the cedars of Lebanon that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan; and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up; and upon every high tower and upon every fenced city; and upon all the ships of Tarshish and upon all the pleasant pictures; and the loftiness of Man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low; and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day; and the idols* he shall *utterly abolish;* or, if the authority of the New Testament is more

divine, and less objected to, here it is: — *There was a certain man called Simon, which, beforetime, in the same city, used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one, to whom they all gave heed from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. And to him they had regard, because of a long time he had bewitched them with his sorceries. But when they believed Philip preaching* —. We have quoted enough.

There was an able report made in the Legislature, written by Hon. Allen W. Dodge, in which the claims of the board were powerfully contested, and some strong arguments used to prove it was positively pernicious. His view, if we recollect aright, was, that the character of New England had always been to lean on no central power; the diffusion of her intelligence was the foundation of her strength. When Great Britain took away the charter of Massachusetts in the commencement of the Revolution, the reason why she did not fall into anarchy was, the little republics, called towns, were every where diffused; an organization existed, strongly fixed and widely spread, which saved us from the horrors our enemies designed for us; that on these towns, and on their officers, rested and must rest mainly the great responsibility in improving education; they were near; a central power would be remote; and however we might select an agent to design and invent for us, the toil and care, the detail and conflict, must be with the school committee and instructers; that even if not so, the very habit of looking to some concentrated point would be pernicious; it would relax our vigilance and impair our strength, just as a limb, swathed in bandages and suspended in a sling, becomes impaired in its vigor by remitting its activity. We are sensible we give a very imperfect representation of this excellent report; it made a great impression on our minds at the time, and we

would earnestly recal it to the attention of the legislator at the present session. They may not agree to all its sentiments; but before they vote a single cent to the furtherance of modern plans, we ask them well to consider what these plans are. If they believe that children are to be educated only from spontaneous industry, that is, to study just as much as they please; that the delights of knowledge will carry them along all the way through under a master who knows his business; that the *lautir* and *phonic* method is to take the place of the old-fashioned alphabet; that a new set of teachers, formed under the fostering care of the Secretary, are to be imported from newly-modelled schools; in short, if they approve of all the radical innovations of a mind that has ten thousand times as much genius as judgment, and in fact has no redundancy of either, — why, then, let them vote a liberal supply to these purposes — as expensive as they are false. But if Massachusetts is true to herself; if she believes that her homely schools are to be improved in a sober manner; that fine theories would only impair them; and that those who devise can best apply their own plans; if they wish for no central power, but a diffused responsibility and a diffused benefit, — then let her venerable senators awake to their duty, and not tax the people, to *prolong* evils, which they had better be trebly taxed to *prevent*. Let them wake to their duty before their laws are abused and their schools reformed into ruin.

It is somewhat alarming, too, that no one but the Secretary himself knows how far his invention reaches. He has a fertile mind, not the least checked by experience; his moral courage is immense, and he is not the least startled by his own conclusions. He has already uttered some assumptions, which seem to us to lead to other consequences; and an alarmed citizen might ask, not only *what he has done, but where he is to stop.* If boys can be governed by gentle love

— why not men? If this vast scale of motives, reaching from the Eternal throne down to earth, (but never going below it,) exists for schools, why not for the country? — Who knows, when education is a little more perfected, and our virtuous citizens are trained to it, but we may banish our jails and our sheriffs, as well as our rods and our emulation? We know not that Mr. Mann is a non-resistant; but he has just that musing benevolence, which, for ever grasping and for ever smiling, marches on, without one ray from reason to enlighten it, to conclusions which have nothing to justify them but their terrible consistency with a first postulate. We have no doubt that the pigeon-holes of his desk are filled with speculations yet lost to the world; and that his midnight hours have not always been spent in making reports. It is a natural impression, that so restless a mind will not be stationary. We mean not to impute any thing slanderous to him. We can only judge of the operation of other minds by the natural order in our own. We must say that we should be non-resistants, no-government men, could we become *converts* to the Secretary's opinions.

Boston has not always been the centre of such speculations. Perhaps there are few men to whom a whole generation were under greater obligations than Caleb Bingham. He flourished just after the Revolutionary war, and he caught the spirit of the times. He had high aspirations of what America was to be; and he supposed education to be the very pillar and basis of practical liberty. He not only taught, but he wrote and compiled; and some of us remember the tone of patriotism, the ardor of freedom, we caught from the pieces in the *American Preceptor*, and the *Columbian Orator*. We shall always look back to the impressions made by these books, with that mystical reverence which can be engendered only in childhood. There we learned how Chatham defended America; how, from "the tapestry that

adorns these walls," he called upon the immortal ancestor of Lord Suffolk to frown with indignation on the cruelty which could employ the merciless cannibals, the savage hell-hounds of America, in torturing, murdering, and eating, our captivated citizens. We seemed to hear the venerable orator; and our youthful blood boiled with indignation at the tyranny thus painted to our imagination in flashes of light. Ah! those were golden days.

"Ah! happy hills; ah, pleasing shade;
Ah, hills beloved in vain —
Where once my careless childhood strayed,
A stranger yet to pain.
I feel the gales that from ye blow,
A momentary bliss bestow,
As, waving fresh with gladsome wing,
My weary soul they seem to soothe,
And, redolent of joy and youth,
To breathe a second Spring."

Yet Mr. Bingham, thus ardent in his imagination, a projector and a democrat, had none of the modern false theories. In one of his dialogues, written or selected, he ridicules this flowery-lawn system of education.

"Scene. *A Public House in the town of* ———.

Enter School-Master, with a pack on his back.

School-Master. How fare you, Landlord? What have you got that is good to drink?

Landlord. I have Gin, West India, genuine New England Whisky, and Cider Brandy.

School-Master. Make us a stiff mug of sling. Put in a gill and a half of pure New England, and sweeten it well with 'lasses.

Landlord. It shall be done, sir, to your liking.

School-Master. Do you know of any vacancy in a school in your part of the country, Landlord?

Landlord. There is a vacancy in our district; and I expect the Parson and our three School-committee men will be at my house directly, to consult on matters relative to the school.

School-Master. Well! here is the lad that will serve them as *cheap* as any in America, and I believe I may say as *well* too; for I profess no small share of skill in that business. I have kept school eleven winters; and have often had a matter of fifty scholars at a time. I have teached a child his letters in a day, and to read in the Psalter in a fortnight; and I always feel very much ashamed, if I use more than a quire of paper in larnin a boy to write as well as his master. As for government, I will turn my back to no man. I never flog my scholars; for that monstrous doctrine of whipping children, which has been so long preached and practised by our superstitious forefathers, I have long since exploded. I have a rare knack of flattering them into their duty. And this, according to a celebrated Doctor at Philadelphia, whose works I have heard of, though I never read them, is the grand criterion of school government. It is, Landlord, it is the very philosopher's stone. I am told, likewise, that this same Doctor does not believe that Solomon and others really meant licken, in the proper sense of the word, when they talked so much about using the rod, &c. He supposes they meant confining them in dungeons, starving them for three or four days at a time, and then giving them a portion *tartro-mattucks*, and such kind of mild punishment. And, zounds! Landlord, I believe he is about half right."

Columbian Orator, pp. 158, 159.

The great doctor at Philadelphia was probably Dr. Rush, whose opinions certainly wanted one weight — that of being permanent. And see how this sublime school-master understood all about the "*the great scale of motives;*" "the expulsive power of a new affection;" the "higher and more refined motives" — "the all but omnipotent influence of love and attachment."

The American Hudibras has poured his scorching ridicule on the head of the same folly: —

"And what can mean your simple whim here,
To keep her poring on her primer?
'T is quite enough for girls to know,
If she can read a billetdoux,
Or write a line you'd understand
Without an alphabet o' th' hand.
What need she learn to write or spell?
A pot-hook scrawl is just as well;
It ranks her with the better sort,
For 't is the reigning mode at court.

And why should girls be learned or wise?
Books only serve to spoil the eyes;
The studious eye but faintly twinkles,
And reading paves the way to wrinkles."

TRUMBULL. Progress of Dulness, Part iii.

Education is a great concern; it has often been tampered with by vain theorists; it has suffered much from the stupid folly and the delusive wisdom of its treacherous friends; and we hardly know which have injured it most. Our conviction is, that it has much more to hope from the collected wisdom and common prudence of the community, than from the suggestions of the individual. Locke injured it by his theories, and so did Rousseau, and so did Milton. All their plans were too splendid to be true. It is to be advanced by conceptions, neither soaring above the clouds, nor grovelling on the earth, — but by those plain, gradual, productive, common-sense improvements, which use may encourage and experience suggest. We are in favor of advancement, provided it be towards usefulness. We think that the teaching of schools ought to be a separate profession; that normal schools may be useful; that a more thorough and less rapid application to the elements of language would be important. Take reading, for example; there are three grades,— first, calling the words and minding the stops; then distinct articulation and emphasis; and, lastly, all those nameless graces, which arise from reflecting the passions and giving a full representation of the meaning. All these things cannot be taught at once — they are three stairs, on each of which the pupil must stand awhile before he advances to the next. The first is very irksome, the second cannot be very pleasant, the third, to an advanced and cultivated mind, may be delightful. The same ratio runs through all education. Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leads to earthly knowledge as well as to final salvation; and the kindest thing we can say of the man who denies it, is that he may be an honest deceiver.

If any reviewer or replicant shall notice our remarks, we request it of them as a matter of fairness to impute to us no more than we say. We are answerable for our own opinions, and not for every reader's deductions; we trust we have found some arguments; we cannot find brains to understand them. We are not for useless severities, nor for useless obstructions in the paths of learning. We would make the course as pleasant as possible; but none make it more hard than those vain projectors, who forget the world which God has made. They feed us with oranges; and strew our path with the peelings, to trip up our heels, and give us those facilities of progression which come at the price of broken limbs and a broken head.

We have uttered our testimony — we have spoken in earnest but not in anger. We love the Secretary, but we hate his theories. They stand in the way of all substantial education. It is impossible for a sound mind not to hate them. Every good man will hate them, in proportion as he reverences truth and loves mankind. We hope to see them laid as low in the dust *as we are.*

For as the bones of the prophet raised the dead man of old, so we expect, when these theories fall, we shall rise. *But not till then.*

Let the world, then, hear the *penitent confession* of the unlucky Thirty-one. With many tears and with all humility of mind, we appear to confess, with our mouths in the dust where our unhappy lot has cast us, that we have been actuated by bitter hatred to the opinions of Horace Mann; and this hatred has been too inveterate to be overcome by any argument he has offered. It will probably last us for ever; we shall carry it with us to our graves. Our experience and our observation have only served to confirm it. It has actuated us in our writings; and it grows stronger on reflection; and such is the obduracy of our transgression, that we should be glad to infect the whole world with our *peculiar malice.*

For Mr. Mann himself we wish success to all his schemes that *do not surpass the powers of nature and are within the circle of possibility.*

If he wishes to fly to the moon, we hope he will consider the value of his neck, before he sets out. May his life be long, honorable and happy. May he drink deep into the cup of common sense. May he have all the reward that a grateful community should give to his midday and midnight services; — and to prove to him that we have no malice to his person, we assure him, if we were called to give his character in a court of law, it would be in the language of Thomas Erskine, on the trial of Hadfield: — "Gentlemen, it has pleased God to visit this unhappy man before you; to shake his reason to its citadel, to cause him to build up as realities, the most impossible phantoms of the mind, and to be impelled by them as motives *irresistible;* the whole fabric being nothing but the unhappy vision of his disease — existing no where else — having no foundation in the nature of things."

POSTSCRIPT.

Since writing our pamphlet, we have seen the Review in the North American. If we were not informed by Mythology, how a unit may become a diversity, the concerted voice of so many journals might be positively alarming.

But we have read of Vishnu and his nine metamorphoses. A society for mutual admiration, if not a unit, may at least be less multitudinous than the echoing voice of their several trumpets may seem to indicate. When a bull of Bashan roars amidst her sounding hills, in perfect solitude, the reverberations may seem like a herd, to the distant and terrified spectator.

The Reviewer assumes two points — the modesty of the one to compensate for the absurdity and presumption of the other. First, that within seven years there has been a great reform in our public schools; and, secondly, that Mr. Mann has *not* done the whole of it. The pride and

modesty of this exquisite doctrine sounds so exactly like a man talking about himself, that, if internal evidence ever produces conviction, it must prove, on the present occasion, that a lauded friend may almost be a *second self*.

We would seriously ask that respectable journal, if they mean to endorse, in education, all the Secretary's innovations? Do they know what they say? Have they weighed the consequences of his improvements? Toil a delight, education an amusement; no emulation; no self-denial; no coercion, and no rod; no elements taught — and yet language speedily attained! Will they pledge their reputation to the world, that they believe, or wish to have it thought they believe, that Mr. Mann saw all in Europe that his glowing language implies? Is he not a much better lawyer than he ever can be a witness? If the literary synod, who conduct the North American Review, will hold a session, and answer these questions in the affirmative, we can only sink down [lower than we even now are] in reverential silence and dumb astonishment. — Shades of the mighty dead! — Ascham, Busby, Cheever, Moody, Pearson, and Bingham — look down from the realms of light, and shower on a sentimental, dreamy, degenerate race some few drops of common sense!

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